

# Johnathan Davis alleged to have made sexual advances towards junior Assembly staffer

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Exclusive Johnathan Davis allegedly made sexual advances towards a junior political staffer working in the ACT Legislative Assembly despite having been earlier warned by his party against inappropriate workplace relationships.

A now-19-year-old staffer in a politician's office says Mr Davis approached him via dating app Grindr, recognising him as an Assembly worker.

■ WATCH: Deputy Chief Minister Yvette Berry announces independent inquiry will be established to examine the handling of allegations made against Johnathan Davis.

The man says after some "uncomfortable" conversations and having raised concerns about their age gap and common workplace, he attempted to cut off contact by blocking Mr Davis. However, the former MLA allegedly set up new accounts in order to keep sending him unwanted messages.

Mr Davis, through a lawyer, would not comment on the allegation.

The staffer said he had come forward with his new allegations because the community had a right to know Mr Davis' inappropriate behaviour extended into the workplace.

"I understand the cost of staying silent when someone behaves inappropriately," he said.

"I question the efficacy and thoroughness of whatever investigatory measures have been put in place in response to awareness of allegations of Mr Davis' conduct.

"I just hope that the testimony of myself and others who come forward will empower others to do the same."

As the Greens faced ongoing scrutiny over their handling of the allegations made against Mr Davis, the latest complaints have raised issues about the workplace culture at the Assembly and whether adequate protections are in place for staff.

The Greens have faced heavy scrutiny over their handling of the complaints against Mr Davis, which included that he had sex with a minor and an inappropriate relationship with a 17-year-old. The party will face an independent

inquiry into its decisions between when the allegations were first raised in late October and when they were taken to police last Friday.

Mr Davis resigned his Brindabella seat late Sunday night.



📷 Former Greens MLA Johnathan Davis. Picture by Sitthixay Ditthavong

Responding to the fresh allegations Mr Davis's conduct affected junior staff in the workplace, Greens Leader Shane Rattenbury's spokeswoman defended the party's complaints process but said stronger protections may be needed.

"The Jenkins review at Federal Parliament and the Broderick review in NSW Parliament have both demonstrated the risks to staff that arise in a parliamentary setting," she said.

The staffer, who does not work for the Greens and came forward to *The Canberra Times*, said he did not want a formal complaint but was making his allegations public to show other young people were not alone in receiving unwanted sexual advances from Mr Davis.

The staffer, now 19, said Mr Davis, 31, was well beyond the age preference range he set on his profile on Grindr, a gay dating app.

"Mr Davis recognised me from my profile as a staffer in his building and boasted that he knew that I worked in the Assembly with him. In hindsight, I regret engaging with him at all on this app, but I admit that I only answered his messages out of curiosity and for the entertainment of having a politician message me," the staffer said in a written account of their interactions.

"At first, our conversations were casual and platonic, with no sexual aspect or flirtation, so I was happy enough to chat to him; he would often speak in detail about his work and daily schedule, communicating with me solely through the app."

The staffer said the conversations became uncomfortable when Mr Davis began to express a sexual interest in the staffer.

Mr Rattenbury on Monday revealed Mr Davis had been counselled by the party "a couple of years ago" about a relationship that was "not appropriate" with a staffer who worked in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Rattenbury indicated this was the only previous allegation of misconduct levelled at Mr Davis, before allegations were brought to his office's attention last week.

A code of conduct governing Legislative Assembly members' behaviour says in all dealing with staff they must "extend professional courtesy and respect" and "act consistently with accepted workplace conduct standards".

The staffer said he expressed concern to Mr Davis in their app-based chats that their conversation was inappropriate "given our approximately 12-year age difference and common workplace. Mr Davis insisted that it wasn't an issue; he rarely took no for an answer".

The staffer said he had no sexual interest in Mr Davis but felt compelled to keep talking with him.

"I became really uncomfortable with these conversations and soon blocked him on the app. Mr Davis then made a new account and messaged me repeatedly on numerous days despite being consistently ignored. He would even ask me about blocking him. I felt pressured to justify my choice to distance myself from Mr Davis. I blocked him once again," he said.

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The staffer, who provided screenshots of conversations with Mr Davis on Grindr to *The Canberra Times*, said after blocking the politician, interactions at the Legislative Assembly became uncomfortable.

"I walked into work and dreaded seeing him. I was grossly reminded of the image of his naked body whenever I passed him in corridors; I anticipated his awkward flirting whenever he approached me at work events, [and] when he approached other young male staffers at work events," he said.

Mr Rattenbury on Wednesday said the party had been contacted by a separate person wanting to provide information about Mr Davis. The party would not receive that information directly, he said.

A spokeswoman for Mr Rattenbury said the party was aware of more people coming forward who have information they wanted to share.

"It's important that they feel safe and supported to do so," she said.

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"To that end, we're working with expert stakeholders and others in the Assembly to set up the best possible pathway for people to come forward with information they may wish to share. We're also working to get the independent inquiry into this matter up and running."

A spokesperson for Assembly speaker Joy Burch said the administration and procedure committee had agreed to an independent review into the handling of allegations against Mr Davis.

"The committee is working through details of the review, the form it will take and who will undertake this review," the spokesperson said.

"Madam Speaker will make details known when they are agreed and finalised. The committee understands the need for timeliness and intend to have details of the review resolved by the end of next week."

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